

Information Bulletin

DATE: February 13, 2006

On July 19, 2001, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and Central Sprinkler Company, an affiliate of Tyco Fire Products LP, of Lansdale, Pa., announced a nationwide voluntary replacement program, also referred to as a voluntary recall, for approximately 35 million fire sprinklers with "O" ring water seals that may not operate as required in a fire. The program also includes a limited number of "O" ring models sold by Gem Sprinkler Company and Star Sprinkler, Inc (also affiliated with Tyco). Central (Tyco) has been providing a free of charge replacement fire sprinklers and the labor needed to replace the sprinklers affected in the recall. Central will arrange for the installation by using either its own Central Field Service crews or by contracting with professional sprinkler contractors.

These sprinklers have been widely used in many different types of building occupancies in new construction, retrofit and replacement installations. Initially, there were 664,564 of the recalled sprinklers sold in Virginia. Some of these may have been installed in other states or the District of Columbia by contractors from Virginia. However, there were contractors from other states doing business in Virginia so we are using 664,000 as an estimate of the number that were installed in Virginia.

To date, 427,848 heads have been identified for replacement in Virginia with 271,797 having been replaced and 73,497 in the bid process. A large number have been identified in health care and educational facilities and in state and local government facilities. We are anxious to identify more in other facilities such as dorms, hotels, apartments, businesses, and other facilities while continuing to work with health care and schools.

We have met with Tyco two times in the past year. The first meeting was to get an update and discuss problems we had identified with the replacement program. Our second meeting in January was again to discuss progress but also to discuss strategies to continue moving forward on replacing the defective heads. Tyco is as anxious as we are to get all defective heads replaced as quickly as possible. CPSC currently has no time frame for discontinuing the recall but that could happen and the free parts and labor may no longer be available.

We plan to again notify as many building owners as possible through their state or national organizations and ask that they cooperate in the program. In addition, we will again ask the media for assistance in getting our message to owners through a press release. We will also work with Tyco to contact owners and sprinkler contractors. However, our most effective method has been our partnership with local officials. Therefore, I am requesting that you to notify building owners that the sprinklers have been voluntarily recalled and strongly encourage them to have their systems checked to insure that they do not have the defective sprinklers. If any defective sprinklers are found, owners should immediately contact Central for replacement of the recalled sprinklers. Central may be reached at 1-800-871-3492 or on the Web at www.SprinklerReplacement.com. The sprinkler models recalled may also be reviewed at that site. Owners must complete the application process but Tyco has assured us that they will help them with that process.

The State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO) will require replacement of the sprinklers when found. It is important to note that when issuing notices of violation and because of the replacement process with Central (Tyco), the SFMO will give time to submit applications to Central (Tyco) and establish participation in the program. Central then prioritizes and schedules the replacements.

Owners who fail to take part in the Central (Tyco) replacement program before it is discontinued will eventually be required to replace the sprinklers at their cost. It is essential for owners to understand that this is a significant life safety issue that can be corrected at minimal costs to them if they participate in the program.

For more information, contact: sfmo@dhcd.virginia.gov or call (804) 371-7170.

Related Links:

- <http://www.sprinklerreplacement.com>
- [Central/TYCO Sprinkler Replacement Program Identification Brochure](#)